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Miller, Nathan L.

Address of
Hon. Nathan L. Miller...

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ADDRESS

OF

Honorable Nathan L. Miller

Governor of the State of New York

ON

**Proposed St. Lawrence
Ship Canal**



Delivered Before the Atlantic Deeper Water-
ways Convention at Savannah, Georgia,
on Wednesday, November 16, 1921,
at 11:00 O'Clock A. M.

M. W. L. Aug. 7, '23,

Governor Miller Opposes Canalization of St. Lawrence.

Raps Proposition as Impractical.

Scores Insidious Propaganda.

Rips Camouflage from the Private Interests' Ship Canal Propaganda.

States \$100,000 Propaganda Fund Is Being Used to Bring Pressure on Congress.

Opposes Unwarranted Expenditure of Public Money for a Project in Foreign Country.

Scores the Evil of Effecting Legislation by Combinations of Local, Group or Sectional Blocs.

The Time Has Not Yet Come When the Trading of Support for Local Improvements Can Commit the Treasury of the United States to a Vast Project for the Improvement of a Waterway in Another Country Regardless of Its Merits.

Would Require One-Fifth the Total Sum Expended in the Improvement of Our Rivers and Harbors During the Entire History of the Country in Order to Start This Foreign Waterway.

Asserts that Every One of Our Port and Harbor Improvements Should Be Completed Before One Dollar Is Spent to Construct a Waterway Through a Foreign Country, Which If Commercially Successful Will Serve to Divert Shipping from Our Own Ports to a Foreign Country.

Urges Improvement of the Harbors on the Pacific and the Tributary Rivers, Improvement of the Gulf Ports, the Rivers Tributary and Those Which Drain the Great Mississippi Basin, the Improvement of the Atlantic Ports and Rivers.

States New York Will Gladly Contribute Her Share for the Improvement of Our Own Waterways, Although that May Tend to Divert Commerce from Her Own Port.

Much More of the Commerce of the States Now Clamoring for the St. Lawrence Waterway Can Be Carried by the Existing Waterways to the Sea, by the Mississippi, Its Tributaries to the Gulf, and by the Lakes and the New York Barge Canal to the Atlantic.

Hopes to See Mississippi and Its Tributaries Developed to the Very Maximum of Efficiency.

Says Plans Are Now Under Way to Modernize the Terminal Facilities of the Great Port of New York Which Is Capable of Unlimited Development.

Expects to See the Facilities of the Port of New York—Both Rail and Water—So Co-ordinated and So Developed as to Handle the Commerce

Passing Through It as Cheaply and as Rapidly as Can Be Done Anywhere in the World, and Says the Greater Undertaking of Providing Adequate Terminal Facilities in New York Harbor Will Be Accomplished Without Asking the Federal Government or Our Sister States to Contribute One Dollar of the Expense.

The Waterway Is There and the Terminals and Elevators Are There So that the Grain from the Middle West Can Be Elevated and Transferred to Ocean Vessels Without Any Delays Due to Congestion or the Burdensome Terminal Costs of New York, and at a Mere Nominal Charge.

States that the Largest Tonnage of Grain Which Will Seek a Water Outlet Is 10,000,000 Tons Annually, and that Every Bushel of that Grain Can Be Floated by the Present Barge Canal.

Asserts that Marked Reductions Have Been Effected Both in Rail and Water Rates Due to the Operation of the New York Barge Canal This Season.

That Irrespective of the Commercial Feasibility, the St. Lawrence Project Is Not Wise, Is Not Fair to the Rest of the Country, Is Not to the Best Interests of Even Those Advocating the Project to Commit the Federal Treasury to a Partnership for the Construction of a Waterway Through a Foreign Country.

Our Western Friends Can Indulge in Their Flights of Imagination Without Risk If They Can Make the Power Users of New York and New England Pay the Price.

Says that the Audacity of the Proposal that the New England States Foot the Bill Not Only for the Development of Power But for the Construction of a Ship Canal to Benefit the West Is Only Equalled by the Imagination of Those Who Are Seeking to Convince the Country that Ocean-Going Vessels Will Ever Navigate an Inland Waterway More Than Two Thousand Miles Long.

Prefers to See the Potential Power of the St. Lawrence Run to Waste a Few Years Longer Than to Turn It Over to the Private Interests, But Hopes to See the Potential Power of the St. Lawrence Developed for the Benefit of the People.

Calls Country's Attention to the Criminal Foolishness of Wasting Hundreds of Millions of Dollars Sadly Needed for Other Improvements in an Attempt to Realize an Impossible Dream.

Opposes Program of Expenditure to Canalize St. Lawrence and Still Further Add to the Burden Under Which Industry Is Now Staggering.

Governor Miller spoke as follows:

It requires some temerity and may seem waste of effort for me to address you in opposition to the project of connecting the Great Lakes and the Atlantic by a deep sea canal.

Temerity, because the threat has been conveyed to me that opposition to that project will result in retaliation by the states composing the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Tidewater Association. That threat does not deter me.

Waste of effort, because that Association has announced in a recent bulletin that, if the 18 states composing it so determine, favorable action on that project will be taken by Congress this year. Light is shed on the method of accomplishing that result by the statement recently published by one of the proponents of the project to the effect that the different states in the Association had appropriated various sums from their respective treasuries, amounting to nearly \$100,000 in the aggregate. "This," he said, "will be used to bring pressure to bear on Congress from the business men and farmers of these states as a result of a campaign of education as to the probable effect of the waterways on the development of the middle west."

I do not underestimate the formidable character of such pressure. I do not underestimate the power in the Congress of a solid bloc of representatives from 18 states. How that power can be used is shown by a recent communication of the Charleston and Jacksonville Chambers of Commerce to their delegates to this convention, who independently of the merits of the proposition, suggest the wisdom of lining up with the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Tidewater Association on the principle of reciprocity. They also suggest that the St. Lawrence project is of no concern to the Atlantic Deeper Waterways Association and should not even be discussed at this convention. I shall presently show that it is of the gravest concern to the entire country and has a direct relation to every one of our internal improvements. But I wish to pause long enough to direct your attention to the danger to our country from the promotion of public undertakings on the basis of reciprocity between sectional interests. That method necessarily precludes a fair consideration of any undertaking on its merits. I oppose the St. Lawrence project because I believe that it involves an unwarranted expenditure of the public money. But unwarranted as I believe that expenditure to be, vast as it certainly will be, the amount of money involved even with

the strain now put upon the public treasury to meet the current obligations of the government is a mere bagatelle compared with the evil of introducing in the Congress of the United States the method of effecting legislation by a combination of local, group or sectional "blocs." Our interests have grown so vast and so diverse that it is easy to arouse apparent conflicts where none in truth exists. The fact is that those interests are mutual and our progress depends upon the maintenance of mutuality of interest, and whilst I suppose some logrolling in river and harbor appropriations is inevitable, I trust that the time has not yet come when the trading of support for local improvements can commit the treasury of the United States to a vast project for the improvement of a waterway in another country regardless of its merits.

The character of the propaganda back of the St. Lawrence project is illustrated by a recent circular of the Association favoring it. It says that the engineers' report is altogether favorable and that it was known that it would be favorable. How that could be known except to the discredit of the engineers is difficult to understand, in view of the fact that every report heretofore by every army engineer who has studied that or similar projects for a ship canal from the lakes to the sea has been adverse. The fact is, and in justice to the engineers who have made the last report, it needs to be stated, that they have only reported as they were required to do upon the estimated cost of the project and its practicability from an engineering standpoint. No one has ever doubted that a ship canal could be constructed around the rapids of the St. Lawrence. The engineers expressly say that they proceeded "on the assumption that the expenditure necessary for a depth of 25 feet for navigation is warranted at this time and that the increase in transportation on the St. Lawrence will make it desirable to attain a 30-foot depth at some future time." They did not consider, they were not instructed to consider, the commercial feasibility of the project, but they are heralded over the country as having submitted a report altogether favorable to it.

The same circular says that the recommendation of the International Joint Commission will also be favorable. In that case the report is discredited in advance, as the Commission had appointed a further hearing when that announcement was made.

Now, I sympathize with the desire of our friends of the middle west for better and cheaper transportation, but that need is common to the entire country. The industries of the country are staggering

under two burdens, excessive taxation and excessive cost of transportation.

It is unthinkable that the burden of taxation will be increased at this time by a vast expenditure which, in the most favorable aspect, is only an experiment, and it is imperative that we concentrate upon those improvements which will serve the greatest needs of the commerce of the country.

The proponents of the St. Lawrence project have been dazzled by visions. They see the Atlantic Coast line extended to Duluth, they see all of the lake ports converted into sea ports, with the flags of all nations flying in their harbors. Naturally they will bring pressure to bear upon Congress, naturally they cannot brook opposition and see only crass ignorance or unworthy motives in those who oppose; naturally they are conducting a propaganda country-wide in extent, and the danger lies in the fact that the partisans of the project are too prejudiced, whilst the rest of the country have not sufficient interest to examine the project fairly on its merits. If I can in the slightest degree stimulate intelligent discussion and consideration of this subject I shall be more than repaid for coming here.

Now, why is this a matter of concern to you?

The engineers have reported that it will cost \$252,778,200 to construct a 25-foot canal and one dam to develop 1,464,000 horse power and that at a further cost of \$17,986,180 the canal can be deepened to 30 feet. In passing it may be noted as illustrative of the sort of propaganda that is being carried on that \$250,000,000 has been heralded over the country as the cost of the entire project, including the development of the 4,000,000 (four million) horsepower which is held out as an alluring bait to the New England states.

Well, the engineers, who were instructed to report on channels of 25 and 30 feet respectively, recommend the \$252,000,000 25-foot canal as the initial project and so I shall consider the subject from the standpoint of their recommendation. That sum is merely a preliminary estimate. Any one familiar with the St. Lawrence knows that it is not humanly possible in a preliminary estimate or even after detailed plans have been made to anticipate every difficulty that will arise in the execution of the project and the report of the engineers shows that such is the case. No such work was ever carried on within the estimates, either preliminary or detailed, and it is certainly reasonable to add at least 25 per cent. for unfor-

seen difficulties, contingencies and unexpected costs. The contribution of the United States to the initial project alone will thus most surely exceed \$150,000,000.

No estimates have been made of the cost of deepening the channels of the Great Lakes and the connecting rivers and no such estimates have been called for. The project depth of those channels now varies from $19\frac{1}{2}$ to 22 feet. The Army Engineers have repeatedly reported that the benefits to commerce from deepening those channels will be incommensurate with the great cost involved. Of course, every harbor will have to be deepened accordingly and even though a part of that expense should be borne by the cities interested, \$50,000,000 is certainly a modest allowance for the additional expense to be borne wholly by the Federal Government to deepen the channels and harbors to only 25 feet. So that upon the most modest reckoning we have an initial expense of \$200,000,000 to be borne by the United States to deepen the channels and harbors of the Great Lakes and to pay its half of the cost of a 25-foot canal and the development for itself of 732,000 horse-power. In passing it should be noted that that is all of the power that this country can claim because further development will be entirely in Canadian waters.

Now, my proposition is that such an expenditure is not warranted at this time even though the project were otherwise commercially feasible. That sum is one-fifth of the total amount that has been expended in the improvement of our rivers and harbors during the entire history of the country. Without counting some approved projects for which estimates are lacking, it will require nearly \$200,000,000 to complete the river and harbor improvements which have already been approved both by the Army engineers and by Congress and are still held desirable. Appropriations for rivers and harbors for the last 20 years have averaged about \$30,000,000 a year, so that at that rate of progress, and in the present condition of the treasury we can hardly expect faster progress. It will take at least seven years to complete the approved projects and we may be sure that there are many not yet approved which could well be undertaken. The approved projects concern every harbor on the Atlantic, Gulf and Pacific coast, and the Great Lakes and every river capable of serving the needs of commerce. We have been slow in the past in improving our inland waterways which nature has provided for us. We need to develop every means of transportation at hand, we need to develop our ports and harbors, every one of them to the fullest

extent possible to meet modern requirements, and I assert that every one of those needed improvements already approved should be completed before one dollar is spent to construct a waterway through a foreign country, which, if commercially successful, would merely serve to divert shipping from our own ports to a foreign country.

Improve the harbors on the Pacific and the tributary rivers, improve the Gulf ports, the rivers tributary and those which drain the great Mississippi basin; improve the Atlantic ports and rivers; spend every dollar that is needed. The State of New York will gladly contribute her share although that may tend to divert commerce from her own port and I hope that her representatives in Congress will support a proper allocation of the available funds to all these great improvements and will not take a narrow, local or selfish view of them for they tend to develop and to serve the needs of the commerce of the entire country in whose development we are all mutually interested, but let those improvements be completed before we pledge the resources of the country to the construction of a waterway to develop the commerce of a foreign country even though that country be a friendly neighbor.

Now, that course will best promote the interests of those clamoring for the St. Lawrence canal, though their eyes have been so dazzled by brilliant rainbow hues that I do not expect them to see it. At best such a canal will serve only a small part of the commerce of the group of states clamoring for it. The great volume of that commerce, both in and out, is bound to be carried by rail to and from Gulf and Atlantic ports. More of it, much more of it can now be carried by existing waterways to the sea, by the Mississippi and its tributaries to the Gulf and by the lakes and the Barge Canal to the Atlantic. I hope to see the use of these waterways developed and I hope to see the great Mississippi and its tributaries developed to the very maximum of efficiency. I understand that the government barges are proving the commercial practicability of navigation on the Mississippi and that barges of light draft, only a few feet, have been constructed capable of carrying heavy tonnage. The fact is that we are only just beginning to understand the problem of inland water transportation. Of course, it is best suited to certain classes of heavy bulk freight, and when water transportation is developed to the very maximum, the great volume of business will still be handled by the railroads. The improvement of our own ports is therefore a matter of first importance to the entire commerce of the country. Inadequate port development, inadequate port terminal facilities any-

where lays an unnecessary burden upon every one interested in the commerce which has to bear that burden.

Now, we may assume that a St. Lawrence ship canal will divert shipping from the Gulf and Atlantic ports to Montreal. Even so, an ice bound port five months in the year, to say nothing of the greater dangers of that route from fog and ice during a considerable part of the other seven months, cannot serve the great needs of the middle west. They will still be mainly dependent throughout the year upon the Gulf and Atlantic ports and the great mass of their commerce will still pay toll in increased costs and delays due to any inadequacy of those ports. The first need then, the prime necessity, the highest interest of everybody, including those clamoring for a new outlet to the sea through a foreign country, is to improve our own ports and inland waterways.

I shall be charged, I have been charged, with selfish interest in not wanting commerce diverted from the Port of New York. I am concerned about the diversion of money needed for our own improvements to the improvement of a waterway in another country, but I have no concern whatever about the diversion of commerce from the Port of New York. That port is so located with such natural advantages that despite freight differentials, despite as many other outlets to the sea as may be constructed, despite even its own archaic port facilities, its capacity is bound to be taxed by the commerce which its location and natural advantages invite. I may say, however, that the States of New York and New Jersey have at last been aroused from a lethargy of more than fifty years, and pursuant to a compact recently entered into between the two states, which has received the approval of Congress, plans are now under way to modernize the terminal facilities of that great port, which is capable of unlimited development. I expect to see the facilities of that port, both rail and water, so co-ordinated and so developed as to handle the commerce passing through it as cheaply and as rapidly as can be done anywhere in the world, and I expect to see that project well advanced long before it will be possible to construct a ship canal in the St. Lawrence. And let me say that, whilst, of course, we hope that the Federal government will devote a fair share of the moneys available for river and harbor improvements to the improvement of the channels about the New York harbor, the greater undertaking of providing adequate terminal facilities will be accomplished without asking the Federal government or our sister states to contribute one dollar of the expense. In that connection I may say that the

State of New York has expended \$165,000,000 on its great inland waterway system to give the states now clamoring for a ship canal an adequate all water route to the sea. That waterway has recently been inspected by a visiting delegation from other states, including forty members of the lower House of Congress, and I am sure that no one who has traversed it can have the slightest doubt but that it is capable of handling all of the commerce which can possibly reach the Atlantic even by a ship canal. We have not only done that, but we have also constructed terminals and are now constructing a grain elevator in the Harbor of New York so that for a mere normal charge the grain from the middle west can be elevated and transferred to ocean vessels without any of the delays due to congestion or the burdensome terminal costs of the Port of New York which are so bitterly complained of. The waterway is there and the terminals are there and the elevator will soon be there for the free use of our sister states. The truth is that even after that vast expenditure we ourselves are only just beginning to learn the value of that waterway and how to use it. It is not necessary to wait ten years for the construction of another. It is there now and if only a fraction of the energy now used by the proponents of the St. Lawrence route to prove that the Barge Canal is useless and to discourage the investment of capital in suitable carriers for its use could be devoted to learning how to use it and to stimulating and encouraging efforts to use it, the relief which the middle western states are clamoring for would be found ready at their hands.

The one commodity from the middle west of any amount in tonnage now seeking a water outlet to the sea is grain, a commodity peculiarly suitable for water transportation, and the largest tonnage which any one claims will seek a water route is ten millions tons. Every bushel of that grain can be floated on the Barge canal, and certainly that is more than will ever be carried by a ship canal by the way of Montreal. The exports of cereals of all kinds from all of the Atlantic and Gulf ports last year were only 7,655,160 tons, and long before the St. Lawrence canal can possibly be constructed, the increasing consumption of our own country will require a very large part, if not all of that surplus, and the only grain for export in sight to be carried on such a route ten years hence will be the products of western Canada. The proponents of the St. Lawrence project base their estimates of the saving in cost of transportation by that route on the cost and delays due to the abnormal conditions during and growing out of the war. Already, this very season,

marked reductions have been effected both in rail and water rates, due to the operation of the canal, and only a small beginning has been made. It takes time to re-establish a means of transportation that had fallen into disuse. It takes time to develop the most efficient and economical carriers for a new waterway. Government operation and insidious propaganda have discouraged the investment of new capital. But already, with all of these handicaps, the Barge Canal has demonstrated that it is adequate and efficient for barge navigation, the kind best suited to restricted waters.

I, therefore, submit that, irrespective of the commercial feasibility of the St. Lawrence project, with an improved waterway already completed capable of floating the entire commodity now seeking another waterway to the sea, and with an approved program of river and harbor improvements requiring every dollar that the Federal treasury can possibly spare for several years to come, it is not wise, it is not fair to the rest of the country, it is not to the best interests even of those advocating the project to commit the Federal treasury to a partnership for the construction of a waterway through another country which will involve at the lowest calculation an initial cost to this government of at least \$200,000,000, and in all probability, if once embarked upon, will ultimately involve untold millions more. Certainly it is neither wise nor fair to do that until a waterway already constructed, now ready for use, has had an opportunity to prove whether it can adequately and economically serve the needs of those clamoring for another.

The proponents of the project evidently realize that the argument against committing the Federal treasury to it at this time is unanswerable and so the suggestion is now made that it can be financed in another way. That brings to the surface one of the most powerful though unseen forces back of the project. It is suggested that a corporation can be formed to finance the project whose securities can be amortized over a period of years from the sale of water power. If the two governments will turn the water power of the St. Lawrence over to the power interests, very likely they will agree to finance the project and the consumers of that power will pay the price. It is indeed a generous proposition of the middle western states that the consumers of power in New York and New England shall pay for the construction of a ship canal to serve the middle west and to divert shipping from their own ports. An active propaganda is now being conducted through the New England states to persuade them of the benefit to be derived from ac-

cessibility to hydro-electric power, but they are not told that they are to be called upon to foot the bill not only for the development of that power but for the construction of a ship canal, although the promise is held out that fifty years hence, after the cost shall have been amortized—a hundred, not fifty years, will be required—they may get cheap power unless forsooth the Federal Government should then decide to seek a revenue from the use of such power. I am bound to say that the audacity of that proposal is only equalled by the imagination of those who are seeking to convince the country that ocean-going vessels will ever navigate an inland waterway more than 2,000 miles long, with hundreds of miles of restricted channels and locks necessary to overcome an elevation of more than 600 feet. Of course, our friends can indulge their flights of imagination without risk if they can make the power users of New York and New England pay the price.

But let us see for a moment how that looks as a power proposition. I do not suppose that even the altruism exhibited by its proponents will lead them to propose that the cost of deepening the channels and harbors of the Great Lakes shall be borne by the power users of New York and New England. Without counting the cost to private interests to adapt the lake terminals to ocean-going vessels, without counting the cost of harbor improvements that may be borne by localities, I have put the cost to the Federal government at \$50,000,000 to deepen the channels and harbors. According to the best information available that is moderate. The proponents say nothing about that. The engineers were not requested to submit estimates on it, but on several prior occasions army engineers have been requested to make such estimates and they have invariably reported that the great cost involved could not be justified by present conditions or any needs of commerce reasonably to be anticipated. Naturally those favoring the project wish to divert attention from that. They would like to commit us to a project to be financed by others than themselves only to find when undertaken that we had that large expenditure at least to make from the Federal treasury and I have no doubt that that is only one of many items that have been overlooked. However, laying that aside, we have an expenditure of \$300,000,000 by both governments, and no one in his senses, after reading the report of the engineers, would put the initial cost at less than that, to be financed from 1,400,000 horse power—more than \$200 per horse power. And no account has been taken and no estimate made of the great cost of constructing transmission lines

the great distances necessary to transmit that power to its only available markets. I do not think that that prospect will look so attractive to the prospective power users of New England when they come to analyze it.

I doubt very much that the power interests will be anxious to grab that proposition unless they can grab with it the right to develop and control the other potential 2,600,000 horse power wholly within Canadian waters. And, whilst the middle western states appear to be unselfish enough to surrender to the power interests the water powers of New York, I do not believe that Canada will thus surrender her great power rights even though she has no immediate use for them.

Many years ago the Legislature of the State of New York granted to a private company the American power rights in the St. Lawrence, subject, of course to international treaty and the consent of the Federal Government. But that charter was repealed and the courts of New York held, the United States Supreme Court held, that the bed of the St. Lawrence River on the American side belonged to the State of New York in trust for all of the people of the state and could not thus be alienated. I hope to see the potential power of the St. Lawrence developed for the benefit of the people, but I should prefer to see it run to waste a few years longer than to turn it over to a private company for either fifty or a hundred years under conditions which will necessarily involve an excessive cost of power.

If a navigation project is sound upon its merits, and in its execution power is incidentally developed, so much the better. In that case the Federal Government is undoubtedly justified, both morally and in law, in assuming jurisdiction of both, but it is neither sound morally or economically to bolster up an unsound navigation project by a power project especially when the latter thus coupled becomes itself unsound. They speak of the power as a by-product and they propose to make the by-product bear the cost of the enterprise. I should say that under that plan the navigation project becomes the by-product and in my judgment it cannot be justified even as a by-product and I am very certain that its altruistic and imaginative proponents will meet with obstacles which they have not foreseen if they undertake to finance it on that basis.

I have considered the matter thus far entirely upon the assumption that it is practicable to realize the dream which has fired the imagination of the Middle West and created the pressure that is

to move Congress. They dream of seeing ocean steamers loading or discharging cargo at the lake docks from or destined to all of the ports of the world. Two theoretical experts have been employed to write a book to prove that that is a true vision, not a mirage. Every shipper, every secretary of every board of trade or chamber of commerce in the Middle West can prove that it is practical, but I undertake to say that no practical steamship operator either on the Great Lakes or the sea can be found who will say that it is commercially feasible. The engineers who have made the preliminary report could not have considered it feasible, else why did they recommend only a 25-foot canal as the initial project when for only \$17,000,000 more a 30-foot canal could be constructed. The fact is that no unprejudiced person competent to speak believes that ocean-going vessels will ever navigate such a waterway. A 25-foot channel would accommodate vessels of not more than 23-foot draft. Now, lake vessels with their flat bottoms and special design have a capacity of 14,000 tons with a draft which the present lake channels can accommodate. But ocean-going vessels with their different keels would be limited to a capacity of not more than 4,000 tons by a 25-foot channel, which would afford a draft of only 23 feet. There are barges navigating the Barge Canal to-day with half that capacity.

In 1920 a report by the Board of Army Engineers was submitted to Congress on the feasibility of a ship canal connecting the Great Lakes with the Hudson. They said that it would need to be 30-foot depth to accommodate ocean-going vessels with a draft of 27½ feet, and such vessels only have a capacity of about 7,000 tons as against the lake freighters' capacity of 14,000 tons with a draft of less than 22 feet. They said that a ship canal could be built connecting the Great Lakes and the Hudson, but that it would not be navigated by ocean-going vessels, and they did not believe that it would be navigated even by lake vessels as the barge was the most economical for restricted waterways. They gave the most cogent reasons for their conclusions, and every one of those reasons applies with equal force to the St. Lawrence project. Now, that is the testimony and the judgment of every practical, disinterested man who has studied the subject. If it were intended to build a canal for ocean-going ships the initial project should unquestionably be for a 30-foot canal capable of being deepened to 35 feet, for every one knows that the tendency is toward larger ships, although the theoretical experts who have written the book to which I referred prove the contrary

by the number of small ships constructed during the war to meet the submarine peril, hundreds of which are now anchored on the mud flats about Newark and Jamaica bays. Now, the truth is that the leaders of the movement know that it is necessary to throw the glamor of a deep sea canal about the project to give it momentum. Without that even the Middle Western States would lose interest. They know, too, or at any rate those having practical knowledge know, that it is not commercially feasible for ocean-going vessels to navigate such a stretch of inland waters. The authors of the book, which is a part of the insidious propaganda now being spread over the country, show their knowledge of its impracticability by their desperate effort to prove that the hundreds of miles of restricted waters and the locks necessary for a lift of 600 feet are really negligible and that, after all, the tendency is to build smaller ocean vessels with lighter draft. The engineers who have just reported show that they know it by recommending a 25-foot instead of a 30-foot channel for the initial project. Congress had asked them to report on 25 and 30 feet or they would doubtless have recommended 22 feet, the present project depth of the lake channels, thus saving the great expense of deepening those channels and providing for the only craft that any one with sense believes will ever navigate the canal if it is constructed. The reasons for that statement lie right upon the surface and are so conclusive as to be unanswerable. It is not necessary to write a book to prove them and no amount of literature can refute them. I do not refer to the fact that the St. Lawrence outlet to the sea is closed by ice five months in the year, nor to the fact that ice and fog add unusual hazards to navigation during a considerable part of the other seven months, nor even for the moment to the hundreds of miles of restricted channels and the locks which alone make navigation by deep sea vessels impracticable. I refer only to the undoubted fact that deep sea vessels cannot possibly compete with lake vessels on the Great Lakes. Lake vessels have three times the capacity of deep sea vessels of corresponding draft. The deep sea vessel has to be built more strongly. It costs under present conditions three times as much per ton of capacity to construct deep sea vessels. That alone puts the ocean carrier out of business on the Great Lakes. But in addition to that the ocean carriers have to have much larger and more expensive crews, practically double, and they cannot discharge and take on cargo with anything like the despatch of the lake freighters especially equipped with their great hatches for rapid and economical

loading and unloading. Now, the difference in cost due to those causes alone would many times offset the cost of transferring cargo. The lake freighter especially designed for the lakes and lake traffic is the most economical for the lakes and the lake rates in the past prove it, but they are unsuited to ocean navigation, and that, too, has been demonstrated by their unsuccessful attempts in the past to navigate the ocean. The ocean-going vessel unsuited to inland waterways must be able to navigate twelve months in the year and must therefore be designed to compete with other ocean-going, not lake, craft.

Now, those facts are too plain, too unanswerable for men of sense to differ about them. They should arrest the flight of imagination even of our friends of the middle west. They certainly should arrest the attention of the rest of the country to the criminal foolishness of wasting hundreds of millions of dollars sadly needed for other improvements in the attempt to realize an impossible dream.

There is another fact not yet perhaps so plainly demonstrated and that is that just as ocean-going vessels are best suited to ocean navigation and lake vessels to lake navigation, so barges are best suited to restricted waterways and each is so much more economical than the other for its own waters as to more than offset the cost of transferring cargo which, with modern machinery is rapidly becoming less and less.

The first proposition is a demonstrated fact and so the deep sea canal rainbow vanishes. All the evidence proves the second proposition. Give the Barge canal an opportunity to demonstrate it, as it surely will if given the chance, and even the middle west will cease its efforts to bring pressure to bear upon Congress to divert money to construct a waterway through a foreign country when we have need within our own borders for all we can spend.

Abnormal conditions have given the impetus to the movement back of this project. The middle west has suffered from those conditions the same as we have all suffered, but the times should admonish us that it is wise first of all to look about us and to utilize to their maximum the means ready at hand to obtain relief from those conditions without waiting a decade for relief and without embarking upon a program of expenditure to still further add to the burden under which industry is now staggering.

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